SUMMER 2025

Launch.

A Washtenaw Community College Publication

Washtenaw Community College

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Alumna Aisha Bowe's trajectory to the stars began at WCC.
Photo credit: Blue Origin

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WCC Board of Trustees
Christina Fleming, Chair; Angela Davis, Vice Chair; David DeVarti, Treasurer; Ruth A. Hatcher, Secretary; Diana McKnight-Morton; William G. Milliken Jr.; Eileen Peck

Letter from the President

Greetings!

Flexibility, accessibility and affordability are hallmarks of a Washtenaw Community College education. This issue of Launch magazine highlights student and alumni success stories that illustrate our lasting value.

Wherever you are in your life journey – even if currently enrolled at a major university – WCC is here like an educational superhighway, offering on-ramps to help you meet your goals.

This edition also celebrates alumni achievements, featuring Aisha Bowe, a proud former WCC student who soared into space with Blue Origin in April. Her journey from uncertain student to U-M aerospace engineering graduate, NASA rocket scientist, STEM entrepreneur and, now, astronaut shows that the sky is not the limit.

Alumnus Nathan Perry followed a similar path to U-M and now works as a Blue Origin Launch Vehicle Test Engineer, helping ensure crew capsule safety.

We also spotlight current university students who are part of a growing trend of Guest Students enrolling at WCC. Last year, nearly 3,000 students joined us from other colleges and universities, drawn by smaller class sizes, direct access to instructors, flexible schedules and low tuition.

Enroll for Fall and launch your dream career with WCC!

Rose B. Bellanca, Ed.D.

Rose B. Bellanca, Ed.D., President
Washtenaw Community College

ENROLL NOW FOR FALL SEMESTER!

Flexible Class Schedule, Affordable Start

Visit **wccnet.edu/enroll** for the full list of programs and to learn more.

130+ PROGRAMS · 50 100% ONLINE

BROADCAST, COMMUNICATION, VISUAL, DIGITAL & FINE ARTS

BROADCAST & COMMUNICATION

Audio Production and Engineering
Broadcast Media Arts
Journalism
- Technical Communication

DIGITAL ARTS

- 3D Animation

Animation for Film and Broadcast
Animation for Game Art
- Digital Media Arts

Digital Video Production

VISUAL, FINE & PERFORMING ARTS

Arts Management
Fine and Performing Arts
Global Studies
Graphic Design
Photographic Technology
Photography

BUSINESS

BUSINESS

- Accounting
- Accounting for Business
- Administrative Assistant
- Business Administration–Transfer Pathway
- Business Enterprise
- Business Office Administration
- Computer Software Applications
- Core Business Skills
- Cultural Resource Management
- Digital Business Marketing and Sales
- Entrepreneurship
- Esports Management
- Human Resources
- Management

Marketing
Marketing Essentials
- Occupational Studies
- Retail and Business Operations

Retail Management
Social Media Management
- Sports & Entertainment Management
- Supply Chain

GENERAL STUDIES

- General Studies–Transfer Pathway

General Studies–Employment Pathway

HEALTH SCIENCES

DENTAL

Dental Assisting

IMAGING

Computed Tomography (CT
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
Mammography
Radiography

NURSING

Nursing Assistant
LPN to RN
RN

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Cardiac Telemetry Technician
Health Administration
Health Care Foundations
Health Program Preparation
Medical Assisting
Medical Billing and Coding
Physical Therapist Assistant
Sterile Processing
Surgical Technology

HUMAN SERVICES, PRE-EDUCATION & PUBLIC SAFETY

HUMAN SERVICES

- Addiction Studies

Human Services

PRE-EDUCATION

Child Development
Early Childhood Education
Elementary Education Transfer
Introduction to Elementary Education
- Secondary Education

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice – Law Enforcement
Paralegal Studies/Pre-Law
Police Academy

LIBERAL ARTS TRANSFER

- Liberal Arts Transfer

MANUFACTURING, TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES, SKILLED TRADES & CONSTRUCTION

TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES

Auto Body Repair
Automotive Cybersecurity
Automotive Services Technician
Automotive Test Technician
Custom Auto Body Fabrication and Chassis Design
EV Safety & Fundamentals
EV Service Technician
Powertrain Development Technician
Transportation Technologies

MANUFACTURING

Advanced Manufacturing (CNC)
Automation Specialist
Industrial Electronics Technology
Mechatronics-Robotics and Automated Systems
Robotics Technician

SKILLED TRADES & CONSTRUCTION

Construction Management
HVAC
Welding & Fabrication

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, & MATH AND SCIENCE

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

- Computer Networking

Computer Systems Technology
Cybersecurity & Operations
- Principles of Cybersecurity
- Programming in C++
- Programming in Java

ENGINEERING

Engineering & Design Tech
Pre-Engineering Science-Transfer

MATH AND SCIENCE

Environmental Science
Exercise Science
General Studies in Math and Natural Sciences
- Math and Science

Biology/Pre-Medicine
Chemistry/Pre-Medicine
Mathematics
- Pre-Actuarial Science

Pre-Pharmacy

APPRENTICESHIP & UNION TRADES

- Apprenticeship Completion
- Construction Supervision
- Industrial Training

Ironworkers Pre-Apprenticeship
- Journeyman Industrial

- 100% available online

Many programs have both online and face-to-face options.

STUDENT SUCCESS GUARANTEE

To learn more about our Student Success Guarantee, visit **wccnet.edu/guarantee**

Scan here to enroll

wccnet.edu/enroll

FLEXIBILITY FUELS
FOR GUEST STUDEN

Flexibility and accessibility are cornerstones of Washtenaw Community College's commitment to student success, especially for Guest Students.

For Samantha Paris, WCC has been key in her academic journey. Paris is working toward a medical career through an engineering degree at the University of Michigan. Early on, she knew a strong foundation in complex mathematical concepts would be critical.

She followed the advice of fellow U-M students: take prerequisite math courses at WCC as a Guest Student.

"When I first arrived at U-M, almost every engineer I spoke to recommended this. I was told that WCC provides a deeper and more applicable understanding of the material," says Paris, who cites smaller class sizes and consistent teaching at WCC.

Paris enrolled in MTH293 (Winter 2024) and MTH295 (Summer 2024), WCC courses that satisfied her Calculus 3 and 4 requirements at U-M. The experience reinforced what she'd heard: WCC's faculty are accessible, engaging and focused on helping students truly master the material.

"At U-M, math courses are often taught by pure math Ph.D. students, which can make the learning experience less predictable. At WCC, professors are much more flexible and willing to explain concepts in multiple ways, ensuring that you truly understand the material before moving on," Paris says.

The number of Guest Students like Paris has grown significantly over the last five years. In 2024, WCC welcomed 2,917 Guest Students, up from 1,890 in 2020. The largest group came from U-M (1,693 students), followed by Michigan State University and Eastern Michigan University.

Guest Students are invited to enroll any semester, and they choose WCC for three main reasons:

- Smaller class sizes for more one-on-one access to expert faculty.
- Flexible scheduling with online, virtual real-time and on-campus options.
- Affordable tuition – WCC's is the lowest in the state – making it a cost-effective way to complete transferable credits.

"As a biomedical engineering student, the mathematical knowledge I was gaining was critical for my future coursework," Paris says.

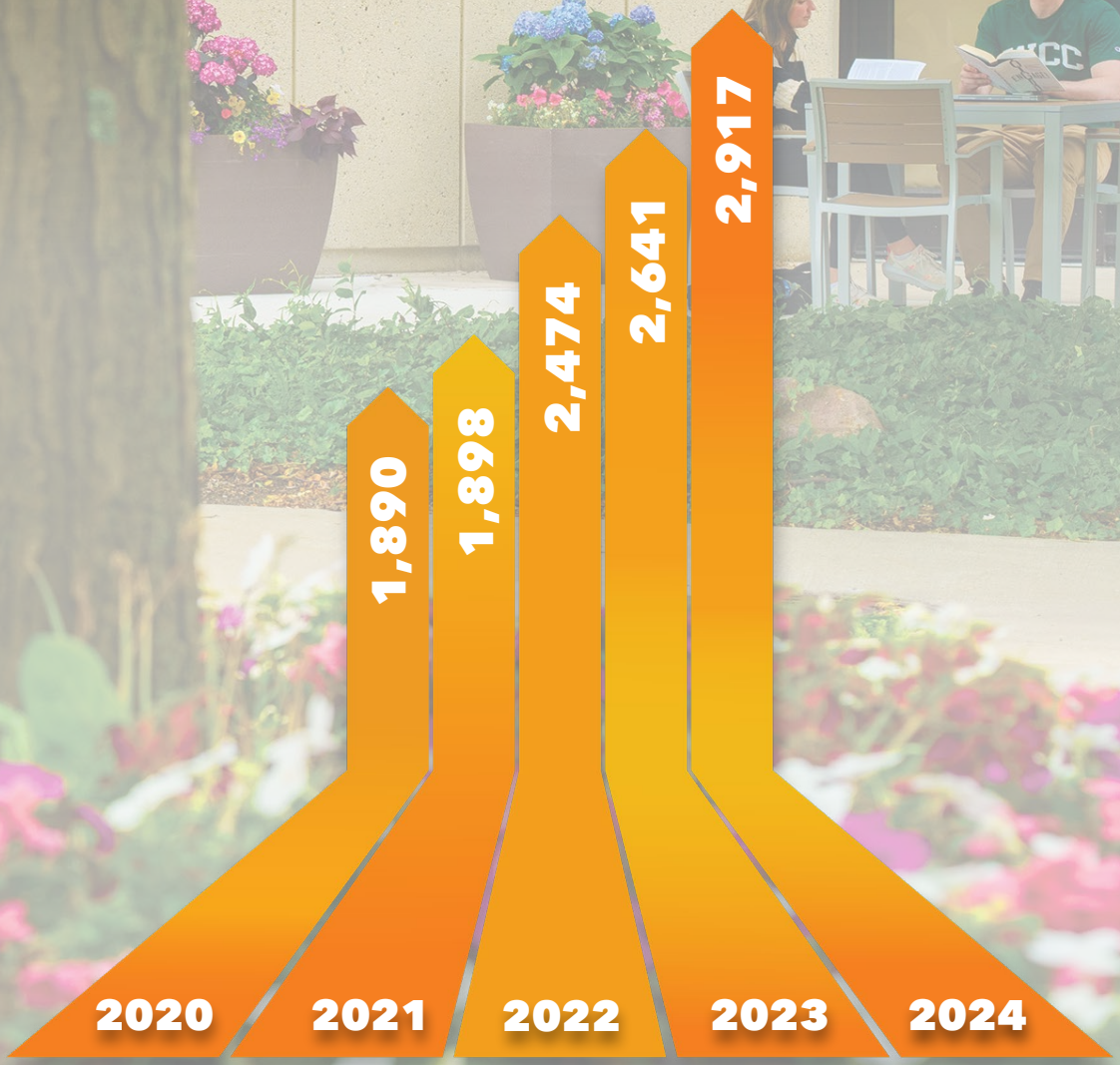
"The teaching style at WCC, with its clarity and willingness to approach concepts from multiple angles, was exactly what I needed to ensure I truly understood the content and could apply it moving forward."

Whether students are in Ann Arbor or across the country, WCC's flexible options make it a smart, student-centered choice for academic success.

SUCCESS
ITS

BE OUR GUEST!

We welcome students year-round.
Enroll and register in a few simple steps.
wccnet.edu/guest
(734) 973-3543, info@wccnet.edu



Guest student enrollment at WCC has grown signifigantly over 5 years.

SMART MOVES

As an internationally competitive ice dancer and Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Michigan, Matthew Sperry turned to WCC to help balance a packed schedule of training, travel and academics.

The move paid off, allowing him to complete a required economics course that never quite fit into his U-M schedule while also saving money.

"I had been trying to fit this course into my schedule at U of M since freshman year and it never worked out. Being able to take it at WCC has removed a large obstacle from my semester planning and eased a lot of headaches," says Sperry, a Virginia native who enrolled in Economics 211 as a Guest Student in Winter 2025.

LOVE, ENGINEERING & WCC

Physics 211, Washtenaw Community College. That's where Gabriel Latoraca and CarolAnne Harris connected, planted roots, and envisioned their future.

Since then, they transferred to the University of Michigan's engineering program, earned bachelor's degrees and are now thriving in STEM careers.

"I'm not a late-to-class person," Harris recalls of their first meeting. "But I arrived at the last minute and had to sit in the back. He was in the seat I wanted."

She soon joined Latoraca's table, and the two began dating.

"I started talking to him and realized he's smart and motivated," she says. "We started studying together. There was a camaraderie in that class, all of us supporting each other."

Latoraca appreciated not feeling alone in a challenging program.

"The studies at WCC were very demanding. It was nice to have other people to remind me that I can learn this, that these concepts are not impossible," he says.

Harris, of Wolverine Lake, completed WCC's Pre-Engineering Transfer Program before transferring in Fall 2020. Latoraca, from Franklin, New York, studied Automotive Technology at WCC and transferred in Winter 2021. Both earned Mechanical Engineering degrees from U-M in 2024.

Today, Latoraca is a mechanical engineer at SwitchBox in Dexter. Harris is Vice President at C&E Construction Co., her father's construction business in Milford.

She credits WCC with preparing her for a career that demands adaptability and grit.

"I'm a woman in a man's world and it can be difficult sometimes," she says. "But my time at WCC helped me learn how to speak out."

Her instructors also instilled key habits. "If there's an expectation, you have to do it on time and be prepared."

The couple encourages other students to consider WCC.

"I had so much self-doubt going in. People said I couldn't do this. WCC lifted me up and brought so many opportunities," Harris says.

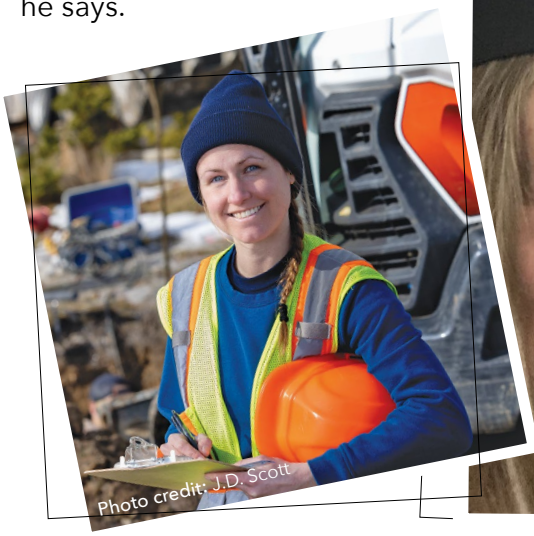
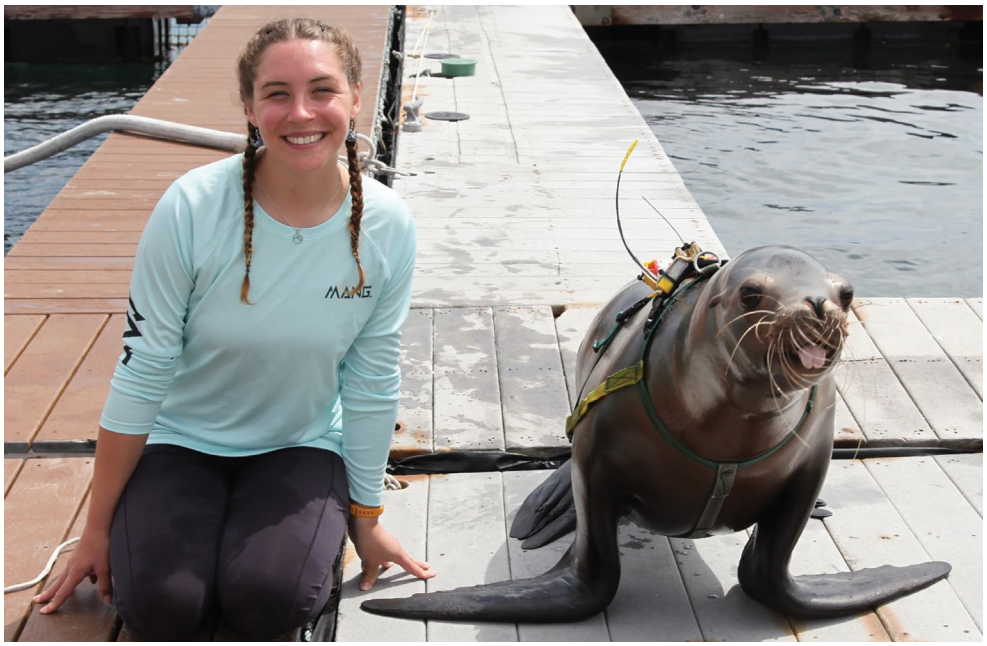


Photo credit: J.D. Scott

Photo credit: J.D. Scott



MARINA WENNSTROM:

From WCC to the Deep Blue Sea

How Marina Wennstrom grew up in landlocked Michigan and ended up nose-to-nose with marine mammals on the West Coast is a tale that began at Washtenaw Community College.

A Canton native and Plymouth High School grad, Wennstrom spent a year at WCC taking general education classes that served as a stepping stone to Florida International University in Miami (FIU).

She graduated from FIU in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in Marine Biology and Biological Sciences. Today, she's in San Diego, working as a contract animal trainer for dolphins and sea lions in the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Program.

She returned to WCC for a Summer 2022 course in organic chemisty that eventaully led to an internship with the Navy's "EVE" (Enclosure Video Enrichment) system. Wennstrom helped develop a video game for sea lions, which is used to support play-based care and study the animals' cognitive abilities.

Among other roles, marine mammals help detect underwater hazards, and play is a vital part of their wellbeing and training.

Looking back, Wennstrom says WCC laid the groundwork for her success.

> **"WCC GAVE ME SUCH A SOLID FOUNDATION...TO EVENTUALLY GET MY BACHELOR'S DEGREE.**

"WCC gave me such a solid foundation in my general credits. When I first enrolled at WCC I knew I wanted to eventually get my bachelor's degree in Marine Biology. However, after taking an Ecology and Evolution class at WCC, I wanted to broaden my area of study to include more biology."

That shift opened more career options post-graduation, as Wennstrom plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Marine Biology and build a career focused on marine conservation research.

Photo credit: J.D. Scott

ROBOTICS JOURNEY BEGINS AT WCC

Dalton Kanerva was on track to study biomechanical engineering at a Michigan university until discovering a passion for robotics at Washtenaw Community College.

That revelation changed everything.

> ***"THE KNOWLEDGE I GAINED AT WCC GAVE ME A LEG UP ON THE COMPETITION."***

The Pinckney native, now 24, earned his Associate in Applied Science in Mechatronics from WCC in 2021. He recently completed a bachelor's in Robotics and Mechatronic Systems Engineering at the University of Detroit Mercy and is on his way to a prosperous career as an electrical controls engineer at Howmet Aerospace on Michigan's west side.

"My ultimate career goal is to work in the defense industry, and my new job is in the defense industry so it's pretty great," he says.

Kanerva credits WCC with laying the foundation for his career. While pursuing his bachelor's, he interned as a Controls Engineering Intern at International Wheel and Tire, a role he landed thanks to his WCC training.

ROCKET-FUELED FUTURES OF AISHA B

Photo credit: Blue Origin

Gazing through the crew capsule's picture windows onto the Earth's curvature, Aisha Bowe's early struggles suddenly sharpened into strengths.

A transformation that began two decades ago at WCC came into focus during a few precious minutes floating through the heavens.

"I really had to rewire how I thought about success and failure. … All the things I thought went wrong in life actually went right," says Bowe, reflecting on her recent journey into space.

"You can't tell me that wasn't meant to be and did not come from a place where the failures didn't make me stronger. I needed those adversities," says Bowe, remembering at times being told that she can't or wouldn't or shouldn't.

But on April 14, Bowe was among the six women who did as they crossed the Kármán international space boundary on Blue Origin's New Shepard 31 mission.

"To be fair when I was looking at Earth from space I was looking at the awe. It was so beautiful. I hope it becomes as routine as flying on a plane because it's such a great perspective of this miracle of life," says Bowe, who credits WCC with launching her career from NASA rocket scientist to STEM entrepreneur to astronaut.

In a celebrity filled launch, it may be lost that Bowe not only raised funding for her own space seat through hard work and sheer will but she also conducted scientific research while in flight, genetically sequencing crops in space and qualifying space hardware.

Once told to pursue cosmetology, Bowe credits her father and WCC faculty for redirecting her path. "When I graduated from high school I didn't see myself as someone who could succeed in a STEM field," she says.

"By enrolling at WCC, it taught me how to ask questions and advocate for myself and how to show up. … You just have to start."

> "BY ENROLLING AT WCC, IT TAUGHT ME HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS AND ADVOCATE FOR MYSELF AND HOW TO SHOW UP. … YOU JUST HAVE TO START."

She's on a mission to deliver STEM education to a million students around the world and is well on her way through her STEMBoard company's LINGO coding kits.

She recently signed with Creative Artists Agency to share stories of persistence and possibility through unscripted content.

"There are meaningful stories to be told," Bowe says. "If you don't like a system you're in, build it and

OWE, NATHAN PERRY BEGAN AT WCC

rewrite it. … That is ultimately my fight for the future. I want to be able to leave a legacy."

Though celebrated, Bowe reminds others she isn't fearless, just determined. "People often ask me if I was ever afraid. … I feel fear and doubt and insecurity all the time. … But I do it anyway. … Everything that you want is on the other side of fear."

NATHAN PERRY

WCC Alum Nathan Perry also played a role in the NS-31 mission. Like Bowe, after WCC he transferred to the University of Michigan for aerospace engineering.

He works at Blue Origin as a Launch Vehicle Test Engineer, ensuring safety and reliability of the crew capsule.

Perry joined the STEM Scholars program at WCC, which offered tours of NASA's Glenn Research Facility in Ohio and "turned out to be the best decision I made in setting myself up for … a career in the space industry."

Ultimately his goal is to develop sustainable habitats in space. "I hope to one day leverage my experience working on a human-rated space vehicle to contribute to future projects aimed at establishing a multi-planetary human presence." 🚀

SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH AN EDUCATION

Launch your own big dreams with an education from Washtenaw Community College.

The Michigan Community College Guarantee is designed to help recent high school graduates enroll in college. Participation is limited. Eligible in-district students can attend WCC tuition-free. Eligible out-of-district recipients would receive in-district tuition benefits and be responsible for the difference.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Students must be a Michigan high school or GED graduate (2024,2025).
- Students must enroll full-time within 15 months of graduation.
- Students must have been a Michigan resident since July 1 the of previous year.

APPLY NOW

① **Complete** Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using WCC's College Code: **002328.**

② **Create account** on the Michigan Student Aid portal within 3-5 business days.

③ **Submit** free application to WCC.

AFFORDABLE EXCELLENCE:
Start Smart at WCC!

Photo credit: J.D. Scott

KEELA LEATH is a radiography student and scholarship recipient.

Keela Leath has worked at Mott Children's Hospital for nearly six years, but until recently, she didn't see it as a career – just a job. As a clerical team member in the Radiography Department, she witnessed the powerful impact of hands-on patient care and began to dream of a more meaningful role in health care.

That dream is now becoming reality, thanks to the affordability of Washtenaw Comunity College.

This Fall, Leath, of Ypsilanti, will begin the Radiography associate program with the intent to transfer to Eastern Michigan University for a bachelor's degree. She's already completed her prerequisites, an achievement made possible by WCC's low tuition and generous financial aid.

With in-district tuition at just **$99** per credit hour, WCC is one of Michigan's most affordable higher education options. Leath's journey is further supported by two Foundation Scholarships and a Pell Grant.

"Without them, school would not be an affordable option for me. I am so grateful for these resources that will allow me to pursue my dream of working in health care. With this, I can secure not only my future but the future of my young family," she says.

Affordability is central to WCC's mission. Thanks to strong community support, tuition remains among the lowest in the state. For in-district students taking a full course load (30 credits annually), tuition costs less than $3,000 a year. Students who complete their first two years at WCC before transferring to a four-year school in Michigan can save $20,000 or more.

And students like Leath, who receive additional financial aid, can save even more.

"The numerous options for financial assistance ensure that students facing hardships can focus on their academic goals without added financial stress," says Leath. "I wholeheartedly believe an educated society is a thriving society."

RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST

$77,660
Median Annual Earnings

6% GROWTH
Projections are through 2033, faster than average for all occupations

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

KNOW

DID YOU KNOW?

On average a WCC **student can save $20,000** compared to taking two years at a state four-year college or university.

$20,000

Photo credit: Terry Jacoby

SECOND ACT

CONFIDENCE, COMMUNITY AND A BUSINESS BUILT AT WCC

When Greg Gattuso began dreaming of running his own business, a Google search for "small business classes" led him to WCC.

With the college's support through a new academic program and free services from The Entrepreneurship Center, that dream became reality. Gattuso, 56, a Queens, New York native who moved to Ann Arbor in 2009, recently opened Chelsea Party Loft, an event space tailored for youth celebrations like birthdays and graduations.

The idea was sparked when Gattuso organized a school Fun Night as PTSO president. "I thought to myself, "this was the kind of positive social experience that was missing these days," says Gattuso, then working full-time at Sharper Image Catalog. "If we could have fun in a school gym, what if we had a dedicated space where we could get people together for special events."

He enrolled in six WCC classes to earn a certificate in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (2024) and tapped into mentoring, networking and other free services through The Entrepreneurship Center.

"The best takeaway from WCC is that I now have the confidence to meet challenges as they come," he says.

WCC TO AMAZON

Joe Salvato's path to becoming a Digital Ads Account Executive at Amazon started at Washtenaw Community College.

A native of Brighton, Salvato completed 44 credits in the General Studies pathway at WCC before transferring to the University of Michigan. There, he earned two degrees in 2022: a Bachelor's in Sport Management and a Master's in Management from the Ross School of Business.

"WCC treats you like an adult and allows you to learn the way that works best for you," says the 26-year-old, who joined Amazon in 2024. "WCC gives you the tools to be a better student on a foundational level, but then allows you to take it upon yourself to pursue what's next."

> "WCC TREATS YOU LIKE AN ADULT AND ALLOWS YOU TO LEARN THE WAY THAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU."

Salvato credits his time at WCC for giving him the confidence to thrive at U-M. "WCC is an unbelievable place where you can find yourself and find your love for learning again."

ADVICE TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

"If you are having any doubts, don't. WCC is there to assist and facilitate anything you need to succeed. It genuinely is a fantastic place to start college and give you the confidence you need going forward."

Q&A VETERANS

KATE WESTFALL
Branch of Military: United States Air Force (2003-2011)
Military job: Network Communications Officer, Intelligence Officers
WCC Program of Study: Associate in Applied Science, Photographic Technology (May 2025)
Background: My Dad was in the Air Force, so we moved quite a bit when I was young. We spent the most time in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Leesburg, Virginia.

Q: What brought you to WCC?

A: I worked in the WCC Nursing Department for close to five years and heard great things about the photography program. After going through what the program entails, I decided to utilize my Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to attain my degree in Photographic Technology.

Q: How has WCC set you up for success?

A: The support is incredible. I utilized the Success Coach services to help with time management and prioritizing everything I have going on. And my academic counselors have helped to ensure I'm on track to graduate on time. Veterans Services have been so helpful with answering questions about using my benefits and making sure I submit all the correct information.

Q: What are your ultimate career goals? Do you plan to transfer to pursue a bachelor or higher degree?

A: I currently have a photography business – Kate Westfall Photography – with a focus on canine and equine photography, and I plan on continuing to build my business.

Q: How did you choose your career path?

A: My parents took a lot of pictures of the various places we lived and the memories we created. I always enjoy looking through those pictures because of the stories that go along with them. When I became older and had a camera in my hand, I continued to take pictures and started to take a lot of pictures of our dogs, as well. … I was medically retired in 2011, and I moved back in with my parents and their two dogs, Mandy and Guinness. Those two dogs got me through so much, especially the transition back to civilian life. In 2015, I started to learn how to shoot in manual mode, and the seed to eventually owning my own business was planted.

Q: Anything else you want to add?

A: I can't say enough great things about the photography program. Because of the courses, I fell in love with film photography. The department's resources are exceptional: we have access to a Hasselblad medium-format film camera, six fully-equipped studio photography bays and the latest mirrorless cameras.

From Service to Student

Photo credit: J.D. Scott

Q: What brought you to WCC?
A: I was originally going to apply to the U-M but was advised to get my GPA up first. I knew the GI benefits are great and that WCC is essentially a breeding ground for U-M transfers, and I had read really good reviews online. If I could do a four-year degree here I would.

Q: How has WCC provided a foundation for success?
A: The Wadhams Veterans Center has gone out of their way to make sure I have the resources I need. Going into the Veterans Center for a quiet space between classes has been great. I've also been involved in the Student Veterans Association and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Q: What led you to your ultimate career path?
A: The only reason I'm going into environmental engineering rather than chemical engineering is because I wanted to become a subject matter expert in sustainability issues. My chemistry instructor helped foster my love for chemistry, was open to discussions outside of class and helped me plan my career.

Q: What is your goal?
A: My end goal is to work for the Department of Natural Resources at the federal level. I would love to influence decision-making, help develop sustainable infrastructure and work in the conservation of natural resources.

SKYLAR PARKS

Military Branch: United States Army (2019-2023)
Military Job: Joint Fire Support Specialist, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina
WCC Program of Study: Associate of Arts in General Studies, Concentration in Math & Natural Science; certificate in liberal arts (May 2025)
Transfer plan: Enroll in the University of Michigan, Fall 2025
Background: Originally from Fenton; played Lacrosse for Siena Heights University first two years after high school before enlisting.

ABBIE BURKMAN

Military Branch: United States Marine Corps (2019-2022)
Military Job: Intelligence Analyst serving on Camp Kinser in Okinawa, Japan
WCC Program of Study: Pre-Engineering and Sciences Transfer
Transfer plan: Michigan State University, Environmental Science major
Background: Originally from Texas; participated in three USMC training experiments, including some of the first waves of females in Marine Combat Training at Camp Pendleton on the West Coast.

(Abbie)
Q: How has WCC helped shape your career goals?
A: I would like to work on/design sustainable energy systems, specifically in the wind turbine sector. When I first arrived at WCC my major was environmental science. It was actually in that first environmental science class that I realized I don't want to just study nature, I want to do what I can to help save it.

Q: How did you arrive at WCC?
A: I knew that I was not ready to jump straight into university stress when got out of the USMC, so I opted for community college. WCC had great reviews, a great location and specific transfer programs that looked promising. I met with the Wadhams Veteran Center and knew that WCC was going to be a great fit for me. They make time to get to know the veterans, go above and beyond when it comes to making sure we get paid and have even helped research and attain scholarships!

Q: Any advice for other students?
A: Set aside one day each week for yourself and do the things you want to do instead of things you feel you have to do. It makes a world of difference when you make time for yourself. Also, study!

Photo credit: J.D. Scott

TWO GENERATIONS, ONE DREAM

When Emily Friedrichsen returned home from orientation for Washtenaw Community College's Medical Assistant Program, she didn't just discover the perfect fit for herself – she found one for her mother too.

"She knew I wanted to return to the workforce and thought this would be something I'd enjoy," says Julie Friedrichsen, Emily's mother. "At first, I was hesitant because of my age (53), but after losing a neighbor to cancer – whose motto was 'never give up' – I felt inspired to take the leap. I signed up, and I love it!"

Now both Julie and Emily are enrolled in WCC's two-semester Medical Assistant Certificate program. "We're study buddies," says Emily, a 2021 Saline High School graduate. "It's been a fun experience. I am happy for my mom to be back in the field contributing to society just like she wanted to be. For Julie, choosing WCC was easy.

"They offer affordable pricing especially for a great education, and I live in Washtenaw County so I get in-district tuition," says Julie, who has four children with her husband John. "I love everything I'm learning. I would definitely recommend WCC. It has a variety of great programs and is a perfect place to start." Emily agrees, saying WCC helped her find direction. "If you don't know the pathway you want to take, someone can always try taking different classes to navigate the choices and find out who they are meant to be and what kind of career that fits into," she says.

MEDICAL ASSISTANTS
Median Pay: $42,000 per year
Projected Growth through 2033: 15% (much faster than average)
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

About the program
WCC's **Medical Assisting (CTMA2) Program** prepares students for careers in physician offices, clinics, labs and other outpatient settings. Students learn coding, scheduling, patient instruction, lab coordination and blood draws.

Photo credit: Terry Jacoby

MATH, MARS & MEKHI:
Alum's journey from Ypsi to Ivy

For **Mekhi Mitchell**, a promising future in mechanical engineering began at Washtenaw Community College, where a supportive environment and dedicated instructors helped him chart a new course to Brown University.

Mitchell, 19, enrolled at WCC in 2022 and earned his Associate Degree in General Math and Natural Science in May 2024. Last Fall, the Ypsilanti native took a giant leap, joining the Mechanical Engineering program at Brown, an Ivy League school in Providence, Rhode Island.

Originally undecided between finance and engineering, Mitchell found his passion for STEM through math and physics classes at WCC.

"WCC helped prepare me for my current course rigor," Mitchell says. "I had many excellent instructors who took pride in providing their students with the best education possible."

Beyond academics, Mitchell immersed himself in campus life, participating in the Finance Club, Jazz Band, and Entrepreneurship Center activities.

Now, he's aiming for a future in biosphere engineering, creating man-made, self-sustaining environments that could support human life on Mars or in space.

"This technology applies to the development of human colonies on Mars and space stations. This is a big interest of mine. However, I'm still open-minded to other potential engineering careers."

BY THE NUMBERS

$99

At just $99 per credit for in-district, on-campus students, WCC offers one of **Michigan's most affordable** tuition rates, consistently ranking in the state's lowest cost quartile

CONGRATS TO 2024-25 GRADUATES!

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES EARNED

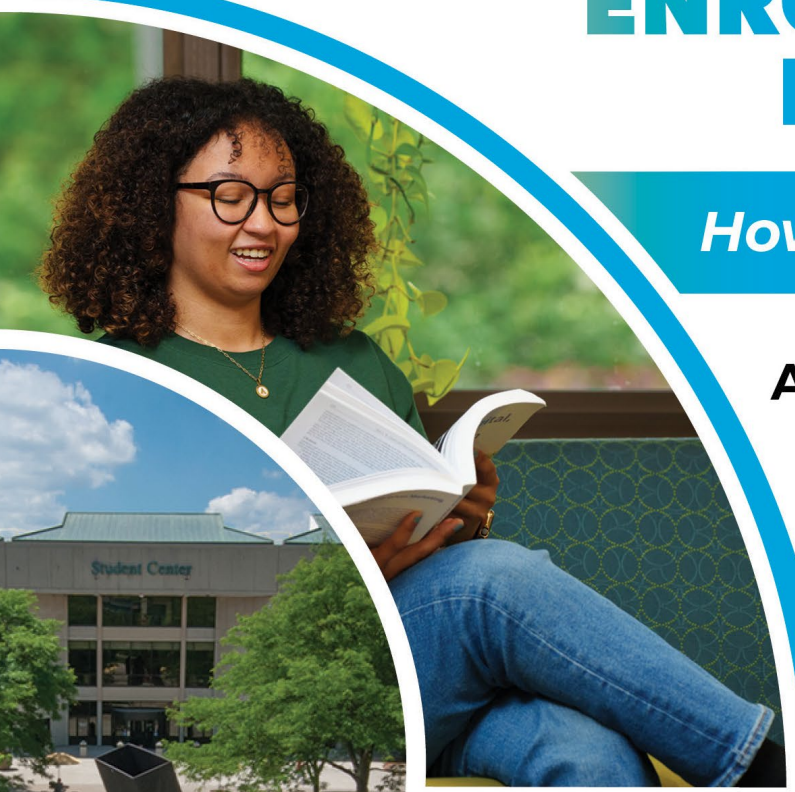
3,347

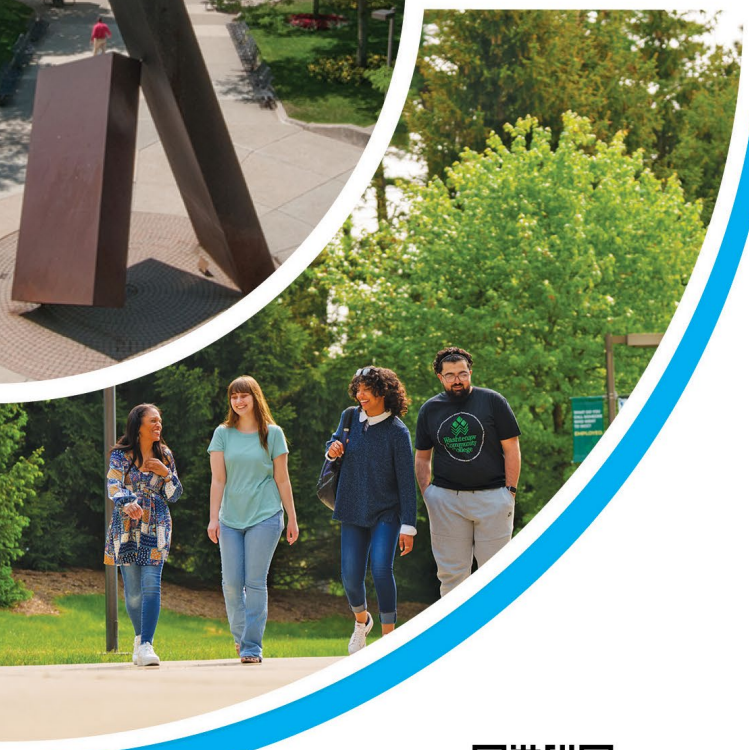
2,430

The graduating class included 2,430 unique students who earned degrees or certificates.

Washtenaw Community College
4800 East Huron Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-4800

ENROLL NOW FOR FALL 2025





How To Get Started at WCC!

APPLY TO WCC. IT'S FREE!

Applying is free and only takes **10 to 15 minutes.**

wccnet.edu/enroll

MEET WITH AN ADVISOR

WCC advisors can help you select a major and plan your class schedule. **Call 734-677-5102** or contact the Student Welcome Center.

wccnet.edu/advising

FALL ENROLL DATES

Session I, August 25
Session II, September 17
Session III, October 1
Session IV, October 18